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Handbook of Public Policy Analysis

Theory, Politics, and Methods

Edited by

Frank Fischer
Gerald J. Miller
Mara S. Sidney

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Theory, Politics, and Methods

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Introduction

The study of public policy, including the methods of policy analysis, has been among the most rapidly developing fields in the social sciences over the past several decades. Policy analysis emerged to both better understand the policymaking process and to suppy policy decision makers with reliable policy-relevant knowledge about pressing economic and social problems. Dunn (1981, 35) defines policy analysis as “an applied social science discipline which uses multiple methods of inquiry and arguments to produce and transform policy-relevant information that may be utilized in political settings to resolve policy problems.”

By and large, the development of public policy analysis appeared as an American phenomenon. Subsequently, though, the specialization has been adopted in Canada and a growing number of European countries, the Netherlands and Britain being particularly important examples. Moreover, in Europe a growing number of scholars, especially young scholars, have begun to identify with policy analysis. Indeed, many of them have made important contributions to the development of the field.

Although policy advice-giving is as old as government itself, the increasing complexity of modern society dramatically intensifies the decision makers’ need for information. Policy decisions combine sophisticated technical knowledge with complex social and political realities, but defining public policy itself has confronted various problems. Some scholars have simply understood policy to be whatever governments choose to do or not to do. Others have spelled out definitions that focus on the specific characteristics of public policy. Lowi and Ginsburg (1996, 607), for example, define public policy as “an officially expressed intention backed by a sanction, which can be a reward or a punishment.” As a course of action (or inaction), a public policy can take the form of “a law, a rule, a statute, an edict, a regulation or an order.”

The origins of the policy focus are usually attributed to the writings of Harold Lasswell, considered to be the founder of the policy sciences. Lasswell envisioned a multidisciplinary enterprise capable of guiding the political decision processes of post-World War II industrial societies (see Torgerson, chapter 2). He called for the study of the role of “knowledge in and of the policy process.” The project referred to an overarching social-scientific discipline geared to adjusting democratic practices to the realities of an emerging techno-industrial society. Designed to cut across various specializations, the field was to include contributions from political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology, statistics and mathematics, and even the physical and natural sciences in some cases. It was to employ both quantitative and qualitative methods.

But the policy-analytic enterprise largely failed to take up Lasswell’s bold vision, following instead a much narrower path of development. Policy analysis, as it is known today, has taken an empirical orientation geared more to managerial practices than to the facilitation of democratic government per se (see deLeon and Vogenbeck, chapter 1). In contrast to a multidisciplinary methodological perspective, the field has been shaped by a more limiting methodological framework derived from the neopositivist/empiricist theories of knowledge that dominated the social sciences of the day. This has generated an emphasis on rigorous quantitative analysis, the objective separation of facts and values, and the search for generalizable findings whose validity would be independent of the particular social context from which they were drawn. That is, the limited framework becomes a policy science that would be able to develop generalizable rules applicable to a range of problems and contexts. In no small part, this has been driven by the dominant influence of economics and its positivist scientific methodologies on the development of the field.

By and large, this contemporary policy orientation has met with considerable success. Not only is policy analysis prominently featured in the social sciences, the practice is widely found throughout government and other political organizations. In addition to academia, policy analysts are employed as researchers in government agencies at all levels of government, in public policy think tanks, research institutions, consulting firms, interest group associations, and nongovernmental organizations. Increasingly they are employed in the public affairs departments of major companies to monitor and research economic and regulatory policies.

At the same time, the discipline has not been without its troubles. It has often been criticized for failing to produce an abundance of problem-oriented knowledge bearing directly on the policy process, or what has been described as •usable knowledge.Ž In the late 1970s and early 1980s, studies showed that empiricist policy research was used far less than anticipated. Research into the utilization of policy findings illustrated that only about a third of the administrators who received such information could identify a concrete use to which it was put. deLeon summed this up by ironically noting that a cost-benefit economist would be hard pressed to explain why so much effort had been given to an exercise with so little payoff.

This is not to say that policy research has been without an impact, but it has not always been of the nature that it set out to supply, namely, knowledge directly applicable to problem solving. Often the contribution has been more of an enlightenment function that has helped politicians, policy decision makers, and the public think about public issues, but not to solve them per se. In view of these difficulties others have sought out new directions. Looking more closely at the nature of social problems and their epistemological implications for a policy science, they have emphasized the inherently normative and interpretive character of policy problems. Policy analysis and policy outcomes, noted such scholars, are infused with sticky problems of politics and social values requiring the field to open itself to a range of other types of methods and issues.

This has lead to a turn to the processes of policy argumentation and deliberative policy analysis. This position, presented in Part IV, challenges the neopositivist or empiricist orientation that has shaped the field, suggesting that it cannot alone produce the kinds of knowledge needed for policy making. Needed is a more normative emphasis that brings empirical and normative inquiry together.

The book is divided into ten parts. Part I, •Historical Perspectives,Ž deals with the basic origins and evolution of the field. The first of three chapters in this part by Peter deLeon and Danielle Vogenbeck, who offer a survey of the development of the field„its successes and failures„and emphasize the political and methodological issues that shaped its evolution, in particular its problem orientation, multidisciplinary perspective, and the normative nature of its research. Based on these considerations, they offer suggestions for future development in the field. Douglas Torgerson focuses more specifically on the contribution of the field•s founder, Harold Lasswell. He sketches out in some detail Lasswell•s multidisciplinary perspective, his concept of the •policy sciences of democracy,Ž and the need to pay attention to the role of social and political context in both the analysis of policy problems and application of policy objectives in the world of action. Peter Wagner concludes part I by stepping further back to examine development of the policy perspective in terms of the evolution of the modern state and its needs for policy knowledge. Tracing the development of social knowledge for human betterment back to the Enlightenment, he discusses the various theoretical traditions of political intervention, the need for empirical knowledge, and the close relationship of such knowledge to the managerial functions of the modern state. He closes the essay with an analysis of the increasing •scientificationŽ of policy making, and political life more generally, that has accompanied these developments.

The second part of the book, •Policy Processes,Ž examines the stages of the policy-making process. Werner Jann and Kai Wegrich lead off by considering the utility of the •policy stagesŽ or •cycle modelŽ of the policy process. Paradoxically, they argue, this model is constantly criticized but yet frequently employed to structure research. The authors argue that most scholars have discarded the faulty assumptions associated with the model, using it to structure diverse literatures and to answer important questions about the nature of policy processes. The second chapter, by Thomas Birkland, examines the first stage of the policy process, agenda setting, which is the process by which problems and alternative solutions gain or lose attention. He considers groups' differential ability to control the agenda, the strategies used to draw attention to policy issues, and the range of forces that contribute to movement onto or off of the agenda. He reviews common approaches to measuring and tracking the agenda status of a policy issue. Mara Sidney follows with a discussion of the applied and academic approaches to policy formulation, emphasizing the role of design and the choice of policy instruments or tools. As the stage in the policy process where participants generate alternative solutions to deal with issues that have made it onto the agenda, research on policy formulation sheds light on how policy choices are made. Recent work is shown to bring normative criteria to bear on policy designs, and expands to include nongovernment organizations as policy designers in their own right, including expert policy communities and think tanks. Helga Pülzl and Oliver Treib then explore the implementation stage of the policy process, comparing top-down, bottom-up, and hybrid approaches. They suggest that assessments to date have overlooked the value of these different approaches. Toward this end, they outline a range of insights that can be drawn from them. They also urge policy implementation scholars to focus on implementation problems that confront the European Union, given its unique multicultural problems and, in this respect, argue that interpretive-analytic approaches can offer promising new directions. Finally, Hubert Heinelt takes up Lowi's path-breaking policy typology and examines in particular his proposition that "policies determine politics." Situating the original work within the policy scholarship of that time, he shows how it can be updated and still useful in dealing with contemporary policy issues. He suggests extending and refining the typology by incorporating the role that institutional settings and policy networks play in generating varied political dynamics, and by attending to the mutability of policy boundaries and problem perceptions.

Part III, titled "Policy Politics, Advocacy, and Expertise," turns to the role of political advocacy and expertise in the policy process. It leads off with the influential advocacy coalition framework developed by Paul Sabatier. Christopher Weible and Sabatier outline the framework, illustrating the way coalitions, organized around policy belief systems, struggle to change public policy. The model emphasizes the role of external shocks to political systems and the role of technical knowledge and expert communities in influencing belief systems. They illustrate the model with a brief case study. Hugh Miller and Tansu Demir focus more specifically on the role of policy communities that form around particular policy issues. Policy communities are constituted by professional experts and others who closely follow and participate in debates about a policy problem. The members of these communities share common interests and concerns for the particular issue domain and are engaged in various ways in bringing about policy change. Concentrating on ideas and solutions for policy reform, such communities play an important role in shaping the deliberations about public policy, particularly in the policy agenda-setting and policy formulation phases of the policy-making process. Finally, Diane Stone takes up the topic of policy think tanks, which have also emerged to influence and shape policy ideas. Such institutions, having now emerged in developing as well as developed countries, have become important actors on the political landescape. In some countries they are closely related to political parties or orientations; in others they are relatively free-standing. Supplying or interpreting new knowledge for policy-relevant decisions, policy think tanks are seen to deal with both domestic and foreign policy issues.

The fourth part of the book focuses on rationality in policy decision making and the role of policy networks and learning. Clinton Andrews's chapter on rationality in policy decision making contrasts the idea of "rationality" as science and as metaphor. He extends his analysis across the relevant disciplines, economics, policy analysis, and management science. In particular, he focuses on the the differences between the rational approach to decision making and the more publicly oriented concept of practical reason. Steven Griggs follows by focusing on the influential theory of rational choice. He critically analyzes the approaches of policy researchers using this analytical model to deal with a number of important topics: collective action, coalition building, bureaucracies, and the political-business cycle. His analysis challenges both rational choice theory in policy making and, not less important, the problems it poses for policy researchers using other competing approaches. Putting the theory in political context, he warns against those who argue that rational choice techniques are neutral and pliable tools. In the next chapter of the section, Jörg Raab and Patrick Kenis focus on •policy networks.Ž Observing the attraction that the concept has had for many policy rearchers, particularly the multidisciplinary interest that it has attracted, they report a substantial range of research findings about policy networks. In particular, they emphasize the relevance of networks in promoting innovation. They also discuss questions involving the relation of policy networks in promoting innovation, the diffusion of ideas, resource dependencies, and the implications of unequal resources among policy networks. They conclude by noting that research in this area has often not clearly demonstrated a number of the central claims advanced by policy network theorists. In the section•s final chapter, John Grin and Anne Loeber focus on the related concept of policy learning. Policy learning is described as a theoretical orientation often advanced to rival the concept of power as a way of explaining policy change. They contrast policy learning with other theoretical orientations„the stages approach, systems theory, and game theory in particular, examine its role in the transfer of policy ideas, and survey its applications and implications in different research domains.

Part V of the book, •Deliberative Policy Analysis,Ž turns to the role of argumentation, rhetoric, and narratives in the policy-analytic process. Deliberative policy analysis emerges in large part as an epistemological alternative to the neopositivist, technocratic tendencies that have had a strong influence on the discipline. In this approach the focus is on language and argumentation rather than evidence narrowly conceived. In particular, the orientation stresses the enlightenment functions of policy analysis. The article by Frank Fischer opens the section. After surveying the limits of the neopositivist epistemology of mainstream policy analysis and its failures to produce •usable knowledge,Ž the chapter turns to a communications model of policy argumentation. The model, as presented, rests on an informal logic of evaluation, illustrated by a brief policy illustration related to nuclear power. Herbert Gottweis takes up the age-old perspective of rhetoric and updates it to suit the needs and interests of policy analysis. Particularly important, he shows that a rhetorical perspective permits the inclusion of the emotional elements of policy politics, normally neglected by conventional approaches. It emphasizes, in this respect, the need to attend to particular audiences in the construction and presentation of findings. Finally, Michel van Eeten explores a particular method of argumentative policy analysis focused on story-telling and the narrative form of communication. Drawing on the perspective developed by Emery Roe, he shows the way narratives are employed by both citizens and policy makers. The argument is illustrated with two case studies.

Part VI explores the comparative, cultural, and ethical aspects of public policy. Martin Lodge considers the goals of comparative public policy analysis, identifying its core objective as explaining the determinants of state action by investigating patterns in policy choices and outcomes across contexts. Comparative studies share a common logic, if not common methodologies. They seek to understand issues ranging from how governments raise and spend money, how they acquire and use knowledge, how they organize and deliver services, and what policies they choose to intervene in society. In the second chapter, Robert Hoppe argues that policy analysts should systematically assess the role of culture when analyzing a policy problem or process. He offers group-grid cultural theory as a tool to understand policy discourses that are sensitive to pluralism and that can constructively move stalemated policy processes toward action. Eileen Sullivan and Mary Segers bring prevailing theories of ethical decision making to bear on cases of public officials who confronted difficult questions. Examining cases that include U.S. officials• response to genocide in Rwanda, and decision making about the use of torture in wartime, the authors offer a model for analyzing the ethical considerations in public decisions. They argue for increased application of deontological ethics to decision making. In the final chapter, Anne Larason Schneider and Helen Ingram discuss the many implications for democratic citizenship that are embedded in and shaped by public policies. They consider how policies influence access to the public sphere and how they affect the material conditions that enable or constrain active citizenship. The authors suggest that policies ultimately contribute to a group’s degree of identification with the nation, and to their conceptions of their worth in the polity.

The seventh part of the book takes up the primary quantitative-oriented analytical methods employed in policy research. In the first chapter, Kaifeng Yang discusses the development of social science’s use of quantitative methods in policy analysis in the United States. He then examines the nature and uses of various methods. These include univariant and bivariate analysis, multiple regression analysis, time series analysis, path analysis, event history analysis, and game theory. In the second chapter on surveys, research, Jerry Mitchell argues that polling attracts and fascinates many policy analysts. Exploring the nature and process of survey research, he describes uses for survey research and its various approaches in policy analysis and ends with a critique, pointing out survey research’s pitfalls. In particular, he raises questions about the democratic implications of the use of surveys in the policy decision-making process. Caroline Danielson, writing about social experimentation, examines the claim that experiments have become the “gold standard” in policy evaluation, serving as a rigorous, straightforward arbiter among political choices. She highlights issues involving causation and methodological transparency. By surveying the history of experimentation in policy analysis and examining the content of an experiment, she concludes that any experiment rests on crucial assumptions and has important limitations. The final chapter in the section turns to the methods of evaluation research. Here Hellmut Wollmann inventories the concepts that underlie policy evaluation and raises various political and methodological issues to which they give rise. Exploring the evolution of this form of policy analysis, he emphasizes the institutionalization of evaluation theory and practices in many countries.

Part VIII explores the qualitative sides of policy analysis. It shifts the focus to the subjective dimensions of the analytical assignment, examining the role of interpretation, social meaning, and situational context. Dvora Yanow focuses on the interpretively oriented qualitative methods employed in policy research. She characterizes these methods as word-based and wextre-oriented to the identification and analysis of social meaning. She describes a variety of approaches to data gathering, such as observation, interviewing, reading documents, as well as methods of analyzing the data, such as frame, narrative, and category analyses. Alan Sadovnik contrasts qualitative and quantitative research, tracing qualitative research’s history in sociology and education in the United States. He surveys several modern paths qualitative research has followed, from ethnography through case studies and grounded research. He then provides criteria for evaluating such research in policy analysis. Henk Wagenaar turns to deeper epistemological issues underlying interpretive analysis. He argues for the need to systematically investigate the meaningful intentions of the behaviors and actions observed in both policy analysis and policy making. The chapter presents two major approaches to interpretation in policy analysis, the hermeneutical and the tradition-generating social interaction approaches. Susan Clarke closes this section with an analysis of the role of context in choosing to use particular policy methods. Focusing on areas of policy analysis where observations alone may not promote insight or understanding, she shows that context is essential to the full range of data observations. Toward this end, she surveys and critiques a number of context-sensitive methods. She concludes that the context sensitivity of observation will help to balance research rigor with flexibility, reliability, and validity in making persuasive and accessible arguments and providing evidence to back claims.

Part IX, “Policy Decisions Techniques,” examines various tools employed to help refine policy choices. In the first chapter on cost-benefit analysis (CBA), Gerald Miller and Donijo Robbins explore the roots of this form of analysis, examine the logic and uses of CBA, and explore its use of contingent valuation in decisions aimed to improve social welfare. They also critique CBA as a form of policy analysis limited by its exclusive use of economic reasoning. The well-established technique of environmental impact assessment (EIA) is the focus of the essay by Yaakov Garb, Miriam Manon, and Deike Peters in the next chapter of this section. Examining the ways it is employed to assess environmental impacts, they trace the history of its use, and suggest ways that it might be helpful in the developing world. They also evaluate the technique in terms of hard science criteria, concluding that EIA is not a hard science, but argue that it can and does contribute to social learning. Bernard Reber then explores the techniques of technology assessment, designed to evaluate the present and future impacts„short- and long-term„of both existing and newly emerging technologies. He describes the initial development of technology assessment in the United States and then examines its adoption in various European countries. In particular, he outlines the practices of participatory technology assessment (e.g., citizens juries and consensus conferences) that have been innovations in Europe. He then concludes with a discussion of technology assessments• social and normative implications. David Laws and John Forester turn to the uses of dispute mediation and describe the practice and process of mediated negotiation in a world of plural perspectives brought to policy analysis. After discussing its uses with several examples from the U.S. and Canada, they conclude that mediation•s practical bent can usefully compel mediators and involved stakeholders to map their relationships to a policy issue, to better understand the issue in terms of their own interest, and to examine those interests in terms of the other parties engaged in this form of negotiation.

The final section of the book, •Country Perspectives,Ž traces the development of policy analysis in selected national contexts. As we noted at the outset, policy analysis emerged as a rather unique American disciplinary field, but, as this section is designed to show, it has subsequently developed in a wide range of other countries around the globe. The authors here review the emergence of the field in different countries, the dominant approaches to policy analysis that have been adopted, and the actors and organizations„both within and outside of government„who practice policy analysis today. The first four of these chapters examine European countries. Wayne Parsons opens with a discussion of policy analysis in Britain. He examines the central role that economic analysis long has played in Britain•s policy-making process, and traces the development of policy studies within Britain•s universities. New Labour called on the social sciences to •become relevantŽ by informing government what works and why, but the author is skeptical that the move toward •evidence-based policy makingŽ will solve problems. Igor Mayer subsequently describes the origins and evolution of multiple government agencies responsible for policy analysis in the Netherlands from the post-World War II era to the present, along with the rise of non-state research institutes and think tanks. He traces a pendulum swing from adherence to technocratic, rationalistic models of analysis toward innovative participatory models, with a swing back in the late 1990s toward a public management approach stressing indicators and output measures. Jan-Eric Furubo focuses on Sweden•s emphasis on the methods of evaluation research. He discusses the ways the positive orientation in Sweden toward the state as a mechanism for problem solving led to a widespread system of commissions connecting research to politics. This institutional structure easily incorporated tools of program evaluation and budgeting from the United States during the 1960s and 1970s in the context of Sweden•s ongoing cultural development. Then Thomas Saretzki dates Germany•s increasing interest in policy analysis to the 1970s, under the social-liberal governing coalition, and examines the concomitant shifts as universities and research institutes adapted to demands for usable knowledge. He highlights disciplinary divides among German political scientists, and the growth of a set of research centers that developed distinctive approaches to policy analysis. He describes how political notions of civil society, Europeanization, and ideational approaches have become incorporated into public policy research, and charts a general increase in interest among younger scholars in public policy as a field of study.

The last two chapters focus on developments outside of Europe. India is discussed by Kuldeep

Mathur and Navdeep Mathur. They show that policy analysis in their country has traditionally been framed in terms of development planning, with economistic modes of analysis having long dominated the field. There has been, though, a recent rise of non-state research organizations and community-based groups offering local knowledge that challenges the longstanding economic approach to problem solving within the state. Universities now produce policy research beyond program evalution, bringing institutional and neo-Marxist approaches to the table. NGOs are shown to increasingly present alternative perspectives on state failures and emphasize the need for democratic, participatory processes of policy making. In the final chapter of the book, Changhwan Mo shows how the shifts in Korean political regimes coincided with and shaped the development of policy analysis. Government agencies dating from the 1960s and 1970s served the interests of an authoritarian regime, producing studies to support its policy preferences, often incorporating American economic analysis techniques. As Korea shifted to a democracy in the late 1980s, policy scholars shifted toward process studies, to analyze the surge of citizen participation and conflict across social and political groups.

SUMMARY

The book•s ten sections and forty chapters provide a broad, comprehensive perspective on the field of public policy analysis. The book covers the historical development of policy analysis, its role in the policy process, the empirical methods that have defined the endeavor, the theory that has been generated by these methods, and the normative and ethical issues that surround its practice. The chapters discuss the theoretical debates that have defined the field in more recent years, including the work of postpositivist, interpretivist, and social constructionist scholars. In this respect, the guiding theme throughout the book is the interplay between empirical and normative analysis, a crucial issue running through the contemporary debates of the field.

Part I

Historical Perspectives

1

The Policy Sciences at the Crossroads

Peter deLeon and Danielle M. Vogenbeck

INTRODUCTION

From the time of Harold Lasswell's (1951) first articulation of the policy sciences concept, the benchmark of their field of inquiry was relevance to the political and social worlds. Responding directly to the questions posed by Robert Lynd's (1939) Knowledge for What? and John Dewey's relentless pressing of pragmatism (deLeon and Vogenbeck 2006), both its salient theories and real-world applications were at the center of the policy sciences. It was, in many ways, seen by the academic and the administrator as the ultimate culmination of the town and gown orientation.

Seemingly, as the world's problems have become increasingly complex, this orientation should be likewise even more central, as it tries to resolve the problems pressing society and its governments. And, indeed, over the past few decades, virtually every governmental bureaucracy or agency (as well an numerous nonprofit groups) has established some sort of analytic charter and attendant desk (especially those dealing with policy analysis and/or evaluation) to underpin its administrative decisions and agenda (see Radin 2000). At the same time, however, others have described the general abandonment in political circles of rational, analytic thought, with policy scholars often voicing the perception that their work is not being utilized. Donald Beam (1996, 430–431) has characterized policy analysts as fraught with "fear, paranoia, apprehension, and denial" and that they do not "have as much confidence . . . about their value in the political process as they did 15 or 20 years ago." Heineman and his colleagues (2002, 1 and 9) are equally distressed in terms of access accorded policy research and its results:

> . . . despite the development of sophisticated methods of inquiry, policy analysis has not had a major substantive impact on policymakers. Policy analysts have remained distant from power centers where policy decisions are made. . . . In this environment, the values of analytical rigor and logic have given way to political necessities.

More recently, author Ron Suskind described a meeting with an official of the George W. Bush White House; that official's comments directly affect the ways in which policy scholars address their stock and trade:

> The aide said that guys like [Suskind] were "in what we call the reality-based community," which he defined as people who "believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality." I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. "That's not the way the world really operates any more," he continued. "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And

> while you•re studying that reality„judiciously, as you will„we•ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that•s how things will sort out. We•re history•s actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to study what we do.Ž (Suskind 2004, 51)

To this observer, a prescriptive policy analysis was being subverted to a descriptive and mostly irrelevant historical or after-the-fact analysis.

Still, to be fair, the history of post-WW II American public policy represents numerous important achievements. In many ways, the American quality of political life has benefited directly and greatly from public policymaking, ranging from the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan (that effectively halted the march of European communism after WW II) to the GI Bill (that brought the benefits of higher education to an entire generation of American men and, with it, the broad dissemination of higher education into the fabric of the American society) to the original Medicare/Medicaid policies (1964) to the American civil rights movements to a flowering of environmental programs to (literally) men on the moon. However, as Derek Bok (1997) has pointed out, American expectations and achievements have hardly produced universal progress compared to other industrialized nations, with crime, the environment, health care, and K-12 education being only four of the United States• shortcomings, thereby recalling Richard Nelson•s (1977) trenchant question, •if we can put a man on the moon, why can•t we solve the problems of the urban ghetto?Ž All of which leads one„roughly fifty years after Lasswell•s initial articulation of the policy sciences„to ask a series of critical evaluative questions as to their continued vitality: Why are some examples of policy research more successful than others? Or, is there a policy sciences• learning curve? What represents a success and what is its trajectory? Can we calculate the respective costs and benefits? And, ultimately, how do we evaluate the policy sciences in terms of both process and results?

To understand the validity of these concerns, it is necessary to place them in the context of the development of the policy sciences. This chapter examines the political, methodological, and philosophical underpinnings in the development of the policy sciences to trace out their role in the contemporary political setting. It also permits us to propose ways in which the policy sciences might be amended.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE POLICY SCIENCES

For the sake of the discussion, let us quickly set out the central touchstones of the policy sciences approach.[1] The policy sciences approach and its advocates deliberately distinguished themselves from early scholars in (among others) political science, public administration, communications, psychology, jurisprudence, and sociology by posing three defining characteristics that, in combination, transcended the individual contributions from those more traditional areas of study:

1. The policy sciences were consciously framed as being problem-oriented, quite explicitly addressing public policy issues and posing recommendations for their relief, while openly rejecting the study of a phenomenon for its own sake (Lasswell 1956); the societal or political question„So what?„has always been pivotal in the policy sciences• approach. Likewise, policy problems are seen to occur in a specific context, a context that must be carefully considered in terms of the analysis, methodology, and subsequent recommendations. Thus, necessarily, the policy approach has not developed an overarching theoretic foundation.
2. The policy sciences are distinctively multi-disciplinary in their intellectual and practical approaches. This is because almost every social or political problem has multiple compo-

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[1] Greater detail and explanation can be found in deLeon (1988); •archivalŽ materials might include Lasswell 1951a, 1951b, and 1971; Lasswell and Kaplan 1950; Dewey 1927; Merriam 1926; and Merton 1936.

nents closely linked to the various academic disciplines without falling clearly into any one discipline•s exclusive domain. Therefore, to gain a complete appreciation of the phenomenon, many relevant orientations must be utilized and integrated. Imagine, if you can, policy research in urban redevelopment (or, for that matter, international terrorism) that did not entail a constellation of disciplinary approaches and skills.

3. The policy sciences• approach is deliberately normative or value oriented; in many cases, the recurring theme of the policy sciences deals with the democratic ethos and human dignity.[2] This value orientation was largely in reaction to behavioralism, i.e., •objectivism,Ž in the social sciences, and in recognition that no social problem nor methodological approach is value free. As such, to understand a problem, one must acknowledge its value components. Similarly, no policy scientist is without her/his own personal values, which also must be understood, if not resolved, as Amy (1984) has discussed. This theme later achieved a central role in the policy sciences• movement to a post-positivist orientation (see, among others, Dryzek 1990, and Fischer 2003).

Beryl Radin (2000) and Peter deLeon (1988) have both described the institutional and political evolutions of the policy sciences.[3] Although they are not in obvious opposition to one another, their respective chronologies offer contrasting emphases. Radin (2000) argued that the policy analysis approach knowingly drew upon the heritage of American public administration scholarship; for instance, she suggested that policy analysis represent a continuation of the early twentieth century Progressive Movement (also see Fischer 2003) in particular, in terms of its scientific analysis of social issues and the democratic polity. Her narrative particularly focused on the institutional (and supporting educational) growth of the policy analysis approach. Radin suggested a fundamentally linear (albeit gradual) progression from a limited analytic approach practiced by a relatively few practitioners (e.g., by the Rand Corporation in California; see Smith 1966) to a growing number of government institutions, •think tanks,Ž and universities.

Following the introduction and apparent success of systems analysis (which many see as the direct precursor of policy analysis) in Secretary Robert McNamara•s Department of Defense in the early 1960s (see Smith 1966), its applications spread out into other government agencies, such as the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in the mid-1960s, with the explicit blessing of President Lyndon Johnson. Although systems analysis never again enjoyed the great (and, to be fair, transitory) success that it did in the Defense Department (see Wildavsky 1979), the analytic orientation soon was adopted by a number of federal offices, state agencies, and a large number of analytic consultant groups (see Fischer 1993, and Ricci 1984). Thus, Radin (2000) viewed the development of the policy analysis as a •growth industry,Ž in which a few select government agencies first adopted an explicitly innovative analytic approach, others followed, and an industry developed to service them. Institutional problems, such as the appropriate bureaucratic locations for policy analysis, arose but were largely overcome. However, this narrative pays scant attention to three hallmarks of the policy sciences approach: there is little direct attention to the problem orientation of the activity, the multidisciplinary themes are largely neglected, and the normative groundings of policy issues (and recommendations) are often overlooked. As such, Radin•s very thoughtful analysis described the largely successful institutional (but basically apolitical) process of formal policy research finding a bureaucratic home in governments.

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[2] In one of its earliest founding declarations, H. D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan (1950, xii and xxiv) dedicated the policy sciences to provide the •intelligence pertinent to the integration of values realized by and embodies in interpersonal relations,Ž which •prizes not the glory of a depersonalize state or the efficiency of a social mechanism, but human dignity and the realization of human capabilities.Ž

[3] For the present purposes, let us assume that the policy sciences rubric encompasses the differences described by the terms •policy analysis,Ž •systems analysis,Ž and •policy sciences.Ž Fischer (2003, fns. 1 and 4, pp. 1 and 3, respectively) is in agreement with deLeon (1988) in this usage.

DeLeon (1988) offered a parallel but somewhat more complicated model in which he links analytic activities related to specific political events (what he terms supply, that is, events that supplied analysts with a set of particular conditions to which they could apply their skills, a learning activity, if you will) with an evolving requirement for policy analysis within government offices (demand, i.e., a growing requirement for analytic skills). In particular, he suggested a series of five political events as having been pivotal in the development of the policy sciences, in terms of lessons learned[4]:

The Second World War. The United States assembled an unprecedented number of social scientists—economists, political scientists, operations researchers, psychologists, etc.—to apply their particular skills to further the Allied war efforts. These activities established an important precedent, illustrating the ability of the social sciences to direct problem-oriented analysis to urgent public issues, in this case, assuring victory over the Axis powers. Indeed, Lasswell and his policy sciences collaborator Abraham Kaplan spent the war studying propaganda techniques employed by the Library of Congress. These collective efforts (and their apparent successes) led directly to the postwar establishment of the National Science Foundation (admittedly more concerned at with the physical sciences) and the Council of Economic Advisors, as well as research facilities such as the Rand Corporation (Smith 1966) and the Brookings Institution (Lyons 1969). However, in general, while the supply side of the policy equation was seemingly battle-tested and ready, there was little on the demand side from the government, perhaps because of the post-WW II society's desire to return to normalcy.

The War on Poverty. In the early 1960s, largely fueled by the emerging civil rights demonstrations and the new visibility of major nonprofit organizations (e.g., the Ford Foundation) on the U.S. political scene, Americans finally took notice of the pervasive, demeaning poverty extant in "the other America" (Harrington 1963) and realized that as a body politic they were remarkably uninformed. Social scientists moved aggressively into this knowledge gap with enthusiasm but little agreement, producing what Moynihan (1969) called "maximum feasible misunderstanding." A vast array of social programs was initiated to address this particular war, with important milestones being achieved, especially in the improved statistical measures of what constituted poverty and evaluation measures to assess the various anti-poverty programs (see Rivlin 1970), and, of course, civil rights (i.e., the 1964 Civil Rights Act). Walter Williams (1998), reminiscing about his earlier days in the Office of Economic Opportunity (O.E.O.), has suggested that these were the "glory days" of policy analysis. Other O.E.O. veterans, such as Robert Levine (1970), were more reserved, while some, such as Murray (1984), went so far as to indicate that with the advent of the antipoverty, anticrime, and affirmative action programs, the American poor was actually "losing ground." At best, policy analysts were forced to confront the immense complexity of the social condition and discover that in some instances, there were no easy answers. DeLeon (1988, 61) later summarized the result of the War on Poverty as "a decade of trial, error, and frustration, after which it was arguable if ten years and billions of dollars had produced any discernible, let alone effective,[5] relief."

The Vietnam War. The Vietnam War brought the tools of policy analysis to combat situations, a massive analytic exercise that was exacerbated by the growing domestic unrest as to its conduct and, of course, the loss of lives suffered by its participants. The war was closely monitored by Secretary of Defense McNamara's office, with on-going scrutiny from Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon;[6] these participating personnel, in the words of David Halberstam (1972), were "the best and the brightest." But it became increasingly obvious that analytic rigor—specified in terms such as

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4. These are elaborated upon in deLeon (1988). Fischer (2003) and Dryzek (1993) have adopted much of his interpretation.
5. For details regarding the War on Poverty, see Aaron (1978), Kershaw (1970), and Nathan (1985).
6. As was reflected by the publication by the New York Times of the McNamara review of the Vietnam commitment, widely known as The Pentagon Papers (Sheenan 1972).

body counts, ordnance expended, and supplies moved, and rational decision making were largely rendered irrelevant by the growing public sentiment against the war often critically described in the American media, and finally reflected in the 1972 American presidential elections. Too often there was evidence that the hard and fast numbers were being purposively manipulated to serve military and political ends. Moreover, even on its relatively good days, systems analysts were not intellectually able to encompass the almost daily changes in the war’s activities occurring in both the international and domestic arenas. At the time, Colin Gray (1971) argued that systems analysis, one of the apparent U.S. advantages of defense policymaking, turned out to be a major shortcoming of the American war effort and was a partial contributor to the ultimate U.S. failures in Vietnam. Finally, and most tellingly, Defense Department analysts could not affect the (respective) political wills necessary to triumph, or, in the case of this war, outlast the opponent. Cost-effective approaches against the North Vietnamese did little to diminish their war-fighting capacity (see Gelb and Betts 1979), until U.S. troops were finally literally forced to abandon the nation they had sacrificed over fifty thousand lives to protect.

The Watergate Scandal. The most troubling activities surrounding the re-election of President Richard Nixon in the 1972 campaign, his administration and the Committee to Re-elect the President’s (CREEP) heavy-handed attempts to “cover up” the tell-tale incriminating signs, and his willingness to covertly prosecute Vietnam war protester Daniel Ellsberg led to impeachment charges being leveled against an American President, which were only averted because President Nixon chose to resign in ignominy rather than face congressional impeachment proceedings (Lukas 1976; Olson 2003).[7] The undeniable evidence of culpability in the highest councils of the U.S. government led to the clear recognition by the public that moral norms and values had been violated by the associates of the president with the almost sure connivance by the president himself. These unsanctioned activities of government, e.g., the amassing of illegal evidence (probably through unconstitutional means) undermined the public norm and constituted an unpardonable political act. Indeed, many observers have argued that President Gerald Ford (who, as President Nixon’s appointed vice president, succeeded him) lost to candidate Jimmy Carter in the 1976 presidential election because he chose to pardon President Nixon, thus protecting him from possible criminal prosecution. Few can look back on the Watergate scandal without reflecting on its effect of the public’s trust in its elected government. Jimmy Carter’s remarkable campaign pledge that “I will never lie to you” and the Ethics in Government Act (1978) were only the most visible realizations that normative standards were central to the activities of government, validating, as it were, one of the central tenets of the policy sciences.

The Energy Crisis of the 1970s. If the early 1960s’ wellspring of analytic efforts was the War on Poverty and the late 1960s’ was the Vietnam engagement, the 1970s’ energy crisis provided ample grounds for the best analytic efforts the country could offer. Beset with nation-wide high gasoline prices, the public was all-but-awash with descriptions of and recommendations for a national energy policy; its elements might have addressed the level of petroleum reserves (domestic and world-wide) and competing energy sources (e.g., nuclear vs. petroleum vs. solar), all over differing (projected) time horizons (e.g., see Stobaugh and Yergin 1979). With this veritable ocean of technical data, the analytic community was seemingly prepared to knowingly inform the energy policymakers, up to and including the president. But, this was not to be the case. As Weyant was later to note, “perhaps as many as two-thirds of the [energy] models failed to achieve their avowed purposes in the form of direct application to policy problems” (Weyant 1980, 212). The contrast was both striking and apparent: energy policy was replete in technical, analytic considerations (e.g., untapped petroleum reserves and complex technical modeling; see Greenberger et al. 1983), but the basic decisions

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7. The impeachment episode was made more sordid by the earlier resignation of President Nixon’s Vice President, Spiro Agnew, rather than face charges of political corruption incurred while he was the Governor of Maryland (see Cohen and Witcover 1974).

were decidedly political in nature (that is, not driven by analysis)„President Nixon established Project Independence, President Carter declared that energy independence represented the •moral equivalency of war,Ž President Ford created a new Department of Energy (see Commoner 1979), with President Carter expanding the alternatives option by creating the Solar Energy Research Institute (Laird 2001). There was seemingly a convergence between analytic supply and government demand, yet no policy coherence, let alone consensus, was achieved, a condition that did little to endear the policy sciences approach with either its immediate clients (government officials) or its ultimate beneficiaries (the citizenry).

Since deLeon•s (1988) analysis, a real historical event seemingly has cast its shadow on the development of the policy sciences, namely the end of the Cold War.[8] The Cold War basically dictated American politics from the end of the Second World War until the very end of the 1980s and, in retrospect, was almost as much an analytic activity as it was political.[9] Given that the central occupation of the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), virtually since it was created, was the careful and thorough monitoring of the (then) Soviet Union, it was particularly remarkable that U.S. policymakers were caught almost totally unawares when Mikhail Gorbachev (and later Boris Yeltsin) presided over the demise of the •evil empire,Ž almost as demanded by President Ronald Reagan a few years earlier. Without questioning the personal courage and (later) flexibility of U.S. and Russian leaders, it was telling that neither system seemed to have the analytic wherewithal that was capable of developing friendly overtures toward one another. One standard explanation was that the U.S. defense budget (and its impending arsenal of weapons systems) forced the Soviets into a ruinously costly arms race, a race in which it found itself unable to compete economically, let alone technically. This disparity led the Soviet to abandon the Cold War, even if this meant the certain loss of the Soviet •empire.Ž While not without its merits, this interpretation sorely neglects the effects of the American antinuclear movement (deLeon 1987) on its leaders. In short, the analytic fumblings of the CIA and the mis-estimation of the effects of American public opinion did much to set the existing Cold War in the public•s conscience and did little to suggest how it might have ended. That is, the end of the Cold War, however salutary, did not represent a feather in the policy sciences• cap.

We need to observe that while the fruits of the policy sciences might not have been especially bountiful when observed through a set of political lenses, nevertheless, political activities and results are not synonymous with the policy sciences. But it is equally certain that the two are coincident, that they reside in the same policy space. If the policy sciences are to meet the goals of improving government policy through a rigorous application of its central themes, then the failures of the body politic naturally must be at least partially attributed to failure of, or at least a serious shortfall in the policy sciences• approach. To ask the same question from an oppositional perspective: Why should the nominal recipients of policy research subscribe to it if the research and the resulting policy does not reflect the values and intuitions of the client policymaker, that is, in their eyes, does not represent any discernable value added? To this question, one needs to add the issue of democratic governance, a concept virtually everybody would agree upon until the important issues of detail emerge (see deLeon 1997; Barber, 1984; Dahl 1970/1990), e.g., does direct democracy have a realistic place in a representative, basically pluralist democracy. Still, this is an issue repeatedly raised by contemporary observers (e.g., Dionne 1991; Nye et al. 1997), none more pointedly than Christopher Lasch: •does democracy have a future? . . . It isn•t a question of whether democracy can survive . . . [it] is whether

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8. Certainly other political events since 1990 have weighed heavily on the American body politics (e.g., the impeachment trial of President William Clinton and the various events surrounding the war on terrorism including the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq), but the historical record on these events, let alone their effects on the policy research communities, have yet to be written.

9. There is a lengthy literature on this monumental topic; see Gaddis (1992) and Beschloss and Talbott (1993) for two timely analyses.

democracy *deserves* to surviveŽ (1995, 1 and 85; emphases added). In light of legislation such as the USA PATRIOT Act (passed in the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 1991 attacks on Washington D.C. and New York City), this question becomes even more germane.

BACKWARD TO THE FUTURE

It is important to realize that the challenges to the policy sciences are not unexpected; any orientation explicitly predicated on normative values is certain to be contentious, just as a range of value issues is fractious. Moreover, the founders of the policy sciences recognized that their approaches were certain to change, as the dilemmas and challenges faced by the policy sciences changed. We can look more closely at two areas in which changes are more likely for the policy sciences, in its interactions with the world of political reality and an expansion of its theoretic constructs.

The first dilemma, one which seems as intractable as the changing political scene would imagine, is reflected in what Douglas Torgerson (1986, 52…53; emphases in original) has depicted as:

> The dynamic nature of the [policy sciences] phenomenon is rooted in an internal tension, a *dialectic* opposition between knowledge and politics. Through the interplay of knowledge and politics, different aspects of the phenomenon become salient at different moments . . . the presence of dialectical tension means that the phenomenon has the potential to develop, to change its form. However, no particular pattern of development is inevitable.

The described tension is hardly novel; C. P. Snow (1964) described this inherent conflict in terms of •two cultures,Ž in his case, politics and science. What with the increases polarization of the American body politic, almost any given issue is well-fortified with (at least) two sets of orthogonal policy analytic-based positions, each carefully articulated in both the policy and normative modes (Rich 2004). And the growing complexity within policy issues (and between policy issues and the natural environment; see Wilson 1998) only make the roles staked out by the policy sciences more difficult to operationalize. In many ways, the three-tiered characteristics central to the policy sciences• approach that were spelled out earlier have been largely accommodated: the policy focus is increasingly on social problems, however and whoever is defining them; few would argue nowadays that politico-social problems are anything else than grounds for multidisciplinary research, with the only real debate is over which disciplines have particular standing; and most would agree that norms„not •objectiveŽ science„are at the heart of most politico-social disputes. For example, nobody would suggest that President G. W. Bush•s education initiatives are mal-intended, but proponents and opponents will argue endlessly over the thrust and details of the No Child Left Behind program and, more generally, the role of the federal government in elementary education.

The problem then, lies more in the reconciliation of differing policy research activities. This resolution is often confounded by differing stances and positions, neither of which is particularly amendable to compromise by those involved. The effect of the policy research orientation is that all sides to any given arguments have their supportive analytic evidence, thus neatly reducing the argument to the underlying values. Which, of course, is the heart of the problem. The policy sciences only promised to bring greater intelligence to government; nobody ever made claims that they would *ipso facto* make government and its accompanying politic more intelligent. The intellectual and organizational format, then, is widely accepted but the exact content and the end results remain under almost constant dispute, so participants can argue over the most basic (and often intractable) points, such as the appropriate roles of the federal government and the private market.

The major epistemological thrust that has emerged over the past decade in the policy sciences has been reflected in the transition from an empirical (often described as a •positivistŽ) methodology to a more context-oriented “post-positivist” methodology, and, with it, a return to the democratic orientation that Lasswell and his colleagues had earlier championed. In many ways, this movement had three components. First, as noted above, the policy sciences’ record of historical successes was much less than impressive. Many scholars suggested that the shortcomings of the policy sciences were possibly due to its positivist methodologies, one historically based on the tenets of social welfare economics (e.g., benefit/cost analysis) that were fundamentally flawed; as such, it should not be surprising that the resulting analyses were also flawed. John Dryzek (1990, 4–6) was scathing in his assessments of positivism, especially over what he (and others; see Fischer 2003; Hajer and Wagenaar 2003) referred to “instrumental rationality,” which he claims,

> destroys the more congenial, spontaneous, egalitarian, and intrinsically meaningful aspects of human association . . . represses individuals . . . is ineffective when confronted with complex social problems . . . makes effective and appropriate policy analysis impossible . . . [and, most critically] is antidemocratic.

Second, the post-positivist epistemological orientation argued for an alternative policy approach, one that has featured different variations of greater citizen participation (as opposed to technical, generally removed elites), often under the phrase of “participatory policy analysis” (deLeon 1997; Fischer 2003; Dryzek 1990; Mayer 1997) or “deliberative democracy” (see Dryzek 2000; Elster 1998; Gutmann and Thompson 2004). In a more applied set of exercises, James Fishkin (1991; 1995) has engaged citizen-voters in a series of discursive panels as a way of bringing public education, awareness, and deliberation to the political policymaking arena. While many have described these meetings as “new,” in truth, they would have been familiar and welcomed to a host of political philosophers as far back as Aristotle (and the Athenian fora) to Jean-Jacques Rosseau to John Stuart Mills to New England town meetings to John Dewey.

Third, policy theorists began to realize that the socio-politico was too complex to be reduced by reduction approaches, and that differing context often required very different perspectives and epistemologies; that is, objectivism was inadequate to the policy tasks. Moreover, many of the perceived conditions were subjectively ascribed to the situation and the participants. If, in fact, the socio-politico context and the individuals within it were a function of social construction, as these theorists (Schneider and Ingram 1997; Fischer 2003; Schneider and Ingram 2005) have contended, then a deliberative democracy model (or some variant) becomes even more essential as affected parties try to forge an agreement, and a benefit–cost analysis (as an example of the historic policy analysis) becomes even more problematic.

But while deliberative democracy or participatory policy analysis has been promising—even illuminating—to many theorists, it has also been severely criticized by others as being “too cumbersome” or demanding too much time or including too many participants to move toward policy closure, especially in today’s mega-polities (deLeon 1997); some have characterized it as little more than a publicity exercise in which the opposing group that has the more strident vocal chords or lasting power is the invariable winner. Furthermore, as Larry Lynn (1999) has convincingly argued, many lucid and powerful (and in some cases, unanticipated) insights have been gleaned from the collective analytic (read: positivist) corpus conducted over the past fifty years and there is little reason to suspect that future analysts would want to exorcise these findings or overlook these approaches. Rivlin (1970) observed years ago that policy research has been slow and it might not have arrived at many definitive answers to social problems, but it has at least discerned appropriate questions to be posed. These insights and capability should not be treated lightly, for asking the right questions is surely a necessary step in deriving the right answers. The question then becomes one of problem recognition and when and where to use the methodologies suggested by the problem itself (deLeon 1998).

Some years back, Hugh Heclo (1978) introduced the concept of “issue networks,” in which he noted that “. . . it is through networks of people who regard each other as knowledgeable . . . that public policy issues tend to be refined, evidence debated, and alternative options worked out—though rarely in any controlled, well-organized way.” These horizontal relationships can include individuals, organizations, lobbyists, legislators, or whoever plays a role in policy development. Heclo’s work evolved into the concept of social network analysis (Wasserman and Faust 1994; Scott 1991), particularly those under a democratic, participative regimen (see Hajer and Wagenaar 2003). This concept is characterized by its use of “networks” as the temporal unit of analysis. That is, public policy issues are no longer the exclusive domain of specific governmental units (i.e., the Department of Commerce for globalization issues or Homeland Security for terrorism) per se. Rather, they tend to reside in issue networks, including governmental units on the federal and state and municipal levels; these are constantly seen to be interacting with important nonprofit organizations on both the national and local levels, and various representations from the private sector as well. Public policies in health care, education, social welfare, and the environment suggest the centrality of the social network phenomenon; President G.W. Bush’s programs in “faith-based” initiatives manifest social networks. All of these actors are engaging in what Hajer (1993) called “policy discourses,” hopefully, but not always, in a cooperative nature.

Hanf and Scharpf (1978, 12) viewed the policy network approach as a tool to evaluate the “large number of public and private actors from different levels and functional areas of government and society.” More traditional forms of policy research have tended to focus on the hierarchical policy process. The network approach looks at the policy process in terms of the horizontal relationships that define the development of public policies. Thus, Rhodes (1990, 304; also see Carlsson 2000) has defined policy networks as “cluster[s] or complexes of organizations connected to each other by resource dependencies and distinguished from other clusters or complexes by breaks in the structure of resource dependencies.” Although there are certainly shortcomings (i.e., for instance, in bounding the scope of the analysis), in many ways social network analysis provides the policy sciences with a methodological approach that is more consonant with the wide range of institutional actors who constitute the policy process than those aggregated under the positivists’ approaches.

A final conceptual trend emerging over the past decade has been the movement in most of the industrialized nations toward a more decentralized (or devoluted) polity. While this is most readily observed in the new public management literature,[10] it is easily observed in a host of recent legislation, such as the Welfare Reform Act and the Telecommunications Act (both 1996), as well as in the federal government’s recent willingness to defer policy initiatives to the state without sufficiently funding them. In many ways, devolution resonates with a more democratic participatory policy approach, since both are more directly involved with the local units of government and the affected citizen.

CONCLUSIONS

As we have noted above, proponents of the policy sciences can point to a half century of activity, with some success (e.g., the widespread acceptance of the policy approach and its three central conceptual touchstones), some trepidation, or misgivings (what we referred to as the “policy paradox”). Moreover, the importance accorded to the policy analysis processes has implicitly turned policymakers’ attention to the more normative aspects of policy, which is ultimately the least amenable to the traditional (read: accepted) forms of policy analysis.

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[10] “Devolution” became the hallmark of the Clinton-Gore administration and their National Performance Review—largely driven by Osborne and Gaebler’s (1992) work—but has continued unabated under the administration of George W. Bush, with the important exception of issues dealing with Homeland Security.

We pose two suggestions to possibly reinvigorate the policy approach. The first has to do with the training of future analysts (also see Fischer 2003), implying that the traditional analytic toolkit is, at best, incomplete or, at worst (in Dryzek's words), "ineffective . . . and antidemocratic . . ." Newer policy approaches—sometimes to compliment, other times to replace the more traditional forms of policy analysis—need to be articulated from the post-positivist epistemologies and the social networks analysis approach. Again, the focus should be on choosing the appropriate approach as a function of the problem at hand, rather than always using the same approach for whatever problem occurs (deLeon 1998). One obvious requirement is that policy researchers will need to acquire a new set of analytic skills dealing with public education and negotiation and mediation, that is, helping to foster new policy design models that are less hierarchical than has been the case, rather than simply advising policymakers.

Likewise, the policy scientist should become more fluent and practiced in addressing the potential effects of decentralized authority, for it is obvious that American government and its offices are moving at the moment toward a more localized, state-centered form of government; indeed, many conservatives (and their policy research efforts) are devising ways to minimize governmental services in general and the federal government in particular. These trends raise troubling issues, such as what measures would be necessary to ensure public accountability? This segues into another recurring dilemma for the policy sciences, namely, how does one insure analyst's impartiality or balance, or, alternatively, are these virtues outmoded in an era characterized by and accustomed to fractious policy debates and interchanges?

One would strongly suspect that Lasswell and Lerner and Merton and Kaplan et al., who first articulated the policy sciences' founding premises, would not have expected them to remain untouched or somehow sacred through the vicissitudes of political events and intellectual challenges. Nor would they have dared to predict a string of unvarnished successes or even widespread acceptance. The challenge, then, for the contemporary policy sciences—if indeed they are at a turning point—is to assimilate how and why the world has changed. With this knowledge in mind, it is imperative that they to re-examine their conceptual and methodological cupboards to make sure they well stocked in order to understand the contemporary exigencies and to offer appropriate wisdom and recommendations. If they falter in those endeavors, then indeed the policy sciences are at a perilous crossroad.

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2 Promoting the Policy Orientation: Lasswell in Context

Douglas Torgerson

When *The Policy Sciences: Recent Trends in Scope and Method* appeared in the early 1950s (Lerner and Lasswell, 1951), the book represented a challenge to an orientation then prevailing in the social sciences. That orientation saw the social scientific project as a patient and painstaking accumulation of knowledge about society. The application of knowledge was not ruled out, but it was also not something to be rushed into prematurely. The contributors to *The Policy Sciences*, a host of distinguished figures from a broad range of the social sciences, generally took a different approach. This approach was particularly given voice by Harold D. Lasswell, a co-editor of the volume, in the book's central chapter, "The Policy Orientation" (Lasswell, 1951b). Following a direction set by the pragmatist philosopher John Dewey in the early part of the twentieth century, Lasswell conceived the social sciences as methods of social problem-solving and thus proposed that they be understood as policy sciences.[1]

Lasswell's proposal in *The Policy Sciences* that the social sciences be shaped through a policy orientation was a public expression of an idea that he had been working on since the early 1920s. As a student and later faculty member at the University of Chicago, Lasswell came under the influence there of Charles E. Merriam—a leading figure in American political science—and, by the 1930s, Lasswell was to emerge as the outstanding representative of the Chicago school of political science. Despite its disciplinary base, the Chicago school was highly interdisciplinary and, responding to both philosophical pragmatism and political progressivism, focused on the identification and solution of practical social problems. This practical focus did not mean a lack of theoretical concern. Especially in the case of Lasswell, there was indeed serious attention to theoretical questions. As a consequence, his conception of the policy orientation was both original and sophisticated.

Context was a chief theoretical and practical concern for Lasswell, and the aim of this chapter is to understand that focus while placing Lasswell himself in context. The policy orientation was Lasswell's proposed solution to what Dewey had, in the 1920s, formulated as "the problem of the public" in regard to the potential of developing an intelligent, democratic civilization (1984, 365). The policy orientation thus takes on a key historical role for Lasswell, as he emphasizes with his argument that "developmental constructs" are of central significance to the contextual focus of inquiry (1971a, 67–69). As we shall see, Lasswell's idea of using developmental constructs to orient inquiry in the context of historical change is profoundly indebted to a view of history advanced in Marxian theory. Lasswell, however, also signals a clear departure from Marx not only by identifying quite a different historical hero, but also by stressing that inquiry and action in the face of an indeterminate future have a necessarily speculative character.

The protagonist in the story Lasswell tells is a critically enlightened policy profession devoted to the cause of democracy. Lasswell portrays the emergence of a policy orientation in the social sciences as an historical development of major importance, and—by drawing attention to it and encouraging it—he seeks to give it shape and direction. However, his promotion of the policy orientation emerged from a context in which liberal democracy, having been severely challenged by the anti-democratic forces of Fascism and Bolshevism, could easily seem the only viable form of democracy.

Discussions of policy professionalism and democracy have since Lasswell’s time taken on a different tenor, rendering dubious his confidence in advancing the “policy sciences of democracy” (1951b). Not only have the apparent technocratic implications of that phrase become widely suspect, but democracy itself is being rethought along discursive—or deliberative—lines (e.g., Dryzek, 2000). The image of discursive democracy envisions vital public discourses playing a significant role in shaping the policy domain. At the same time, critical approaches to policy inquiry have emerged to reinforce connections between policy discourse and public discourse (e.g., Forester, ed., 1985; Fischer and Forester, eds., 1993; Hajer and Wagenaar, eds., 2003). Although these approaches often owe clear conceptual debts to Lasswell, they also anticipate democratic developments in the policy orientation that would prove unsettling to his position.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE POLICY ORIENTATION

The story that Lasswell tells is in a broad sense a version of the story of modern progress, and his promotion of a policy sciences profession certainly has something in common with nineteenth century positivism and its anticipation of governance by a “priesthood” of experts (Aaron, 1969, ch. 2). There is, however, a paradox in this connection. By the time Lasswell was to promote his proposal for a policy orientation, there was already a distinctly technocratic tone to the policy field, one troubling enough for him that he registered a clear objection.

Lasswell was displeased by the common image of policy-analytic work as mere tinkering to adjust the operations of an existing mechanism. “Running through much of the modern work that is being done on the decision process,” Lasswell complained, “is the desire to abolish discretion on the part of the chooser and to substitute an automatic machine-like routine” (1955, 387). He especially took exception to the formalism of rational decision-making models guided by game theory: “In effect the player becomes a computing machine operating with ‘built-in’ rules in order to maximize built-in preferences” (1955, 387). Against this “preference for automation,” Lasswell endorsed a “preference for creativity” (1955, 389). His proposal for the policy orientation thus includes a distinctly critical note (cf. Tribe, 1972). To grasp the significance of this critical element, the main sources of his approach need attention.

On the central role of pragmatism, he was quite explicit: “The policy sciences are a contemporary adaptation of the general approach to public policy that was recommended by John Dewey and his colleagues in the development of American pragmatism” (1971a, xiii–xiv). During the early twentieth century, pragmatism signalled a break with formalism—with an intellectual propensity to take at face value culturally established categories and frames of reference (see Torgerson, 1992). Although tending to share the embrace of science characteristic of the progressive era, pragmatism also recognized science as a thoroughly human and fallible institution. Scientific knowledge could prove itself useful for human purposes, but it could not provide any certain foundation for a “religion of humanity,” as nineteenth century positivism had imagined (Aaron, 1969, ch. 2; Torgerson, 1992).

In a pragmatist vein, Lasswell portrayed the social process as ultimately a seamless fabric, indicating that the identification of seams for the purpose of research pertained to “the context of culture” (1971a, 17–8). The perspective of a participant in a cultural context was the point of departure for conceptualization and observation; inquiry involved a continuous, interwoven process of participant-observation (1971a, 3, 58, 74–75). As Lasswell developed a framework for the conduct of inquiry, he thus proposed mapping the social process and the policy process in terms of categories and symbols drawn from a cultural context, and his framework came with no more guarantee than that it appeared helpful in this context

Disavowing any claim to absolutely valid categories, Lasswell leaves everything open, in principle, to question and revision. What, then, might sustain confidence in his approach? If his categories and procedures are simply elements in a cultural envelope folding back upon itself, does inquiry not remain within its limitations? What Lasswell does is to focus upon inquiry itself as a process that, even though a seam within a cultural fabric, possesses a unique significance. Inquiry has a special status within culture. This is because of the reflexive capacity of inquiry, its peculiar capacity to turn back upon itself and, in doing so, to alter the very culture that envelops it.

Already in his first book, Lasswell had recognized a key principle for inquiry: “We must, as part of our study, expose ourselves to ourselves” (Atkins and Lasswell, 1924, 7). Reflexive insight into self and context holds a central place in Lasswell’s proposed policy orientation. In elaborating the reflexive character of inquiry, Lasswell looked beyond pragmatism to two key figures, Freud and Marx. In Freudian psychoanalysis and the Marxian critique of ideology, Lasswell saw a point of methodological convergence necessary in mapping the context of inquiry. Insight provided a means for breaking through both psychopathological and ideological constraints on inquiry.

Lasswell repeats the story of modern progress, but in a version that departs from the conventional storyline. For he introduces a standpoint of critical reflection able to expose psychopathological and ideological features of the modern world. Lasswell’s critical posture leads him to question specific elements of modernity, but not to dismiss its promise. Modernity, in his view, is an incomplete project that comes with no guarantee of a happy ending. The path of modern development conceivably leads in a desirable direction, but quite undesirable outcomes are also distinct prospects. No longer is it possible, on this account, to naively rely upon the positivist notion of the inevitable progress of humanity to an orderly industrial civilization. In Lasswell, the smooth, dynamic exterior of the modern world at times appears as a front for irrational forces, the constraints and threats of which pose a problem that can potentially be resolved only if consciously recognized (see Torgerson. 1990). A fixation on machine-like routines would not be part of the solution, but central to the problem. In Lasswell’s narrative of the policy orientation, the policy professional clearly emerges as the hero of the story. Yet crucial to the story is how this hero is to become self-aware in the context of a larger pattern of historical development.[2]

WORLD REVOLUTION AND THE POLICY ORIENTATION

Lasswell portrays the emergence of the policy orientation as a major event in world history, elaborating his conception in a manner parallel with, and in contradistinction to, the Marxian vision of a world revolution brought about through the agency of the proletariat. The policy orientation, on Lasswell’s account, is part of a development that is “distinctive” of his times: “the rise to power of the intellectual class.” The world, he argues, is in the midst of a “permanent revolution of modernizing intellectuals”: a crucial role for intellectuals is inescapable, in his view, because of the problems presented by “the complexities of large-scale modern civilization” (1968, 185; cf. 1965b).

The increasing importance of intellectuals comes, in his view, with both promise and threat. Intellectuals could simply form part of oligarchic and bureaucratic structures operating for the benefit of the few at the cost of the oppression and indignity of the many. A policy profession devoted to democracy would depend on a critical stance toward context, and crucial to this posture would be a questioning of the obvious. Although the examination of a familiar world might seem to promise little in the way of interesting results, Lasswell emphasizes the importance of what is not readily apparent—“The world about us is much richer in meanings than we consciously see” (1977, 36)—and he offers a striking exaggeration, “to put the truth paradoxically”: “The whole aim of the scientific student of society is to make the obvious unescapable . . . Ž (1977, 250). The emergence of a critically oriented policy profession would, in Lasswell•s view, count among those developments in intellectual life that have promoted •`breakthroughs• . . . in the decision processes of historyŽ (1958b, 190).

When first advancing the importance of a critical orientation to context, Lasswell in the mid-1930s explicitly invokes a central text of Marxian theory„first published in the early 1920s„the •exposition of the dialectical methodŽ in Georg Lukács•s History and Class Consciousness (Lasswell, 1965a, 18n; cf. Lukács, 1971). What Lasswell proposes is a reflexive project that recapitulates much of the form, if not the content, of Lukács•s critique of capitalism. Especially significant is Lasswell•s accent on grasping the whole both as an objective configuration and as a site of action. It is thus that Lasswell recommends •an act of creative orientationŽ allowing inquirers to locate themselves in an •all-encompassing totalityŽ (1965a, 12). A comprehension of the whole is not to be gained by objective analysis alone, but also requires an active posture in regard to the field of social relationships. No such comprehension can, in principle, ultimately be completed. Inquiry not only is an open-ended process, but is itself part of the pattern of historical development through which the overall totality is constituted„part of an emerging process that remains always open to change.

Lasswell, of course, does not invoke the standpoint of the proletarian class or of revolutionary theory inspired by it. He is also highly suspicious, on methodological grounds, of any Marxian account of future historical development that suggests inevitability rather than emphasizing indeterminacy. In stressing the world historical rise of intellectuals, Lasswell replaces the proletarian class and revolutionary theory with a critically informed policy profession. His move here bears a similarity to Karl Mannheim•s (1936) claim that modern intellectuals have a significant capacity to free themselves from ideological constraints. At the same time, Lasswell•s move is subject to the same suspicion that critics influenced by Lukács have cast upon Mannheim•s claim: that it is oblivious to the full force of dominant interests and, as such, is part of the ideological constraints helping to constitute and reinforce that power (e.g., Adorno, 1967).

What is nonetheless striking in Lasswell is the manner in which he proposes a deliberate project to overcome irrational constraints. The aim of the project is to gain insight into what Lasswell•s terms the •self-in-contextŽ (1971a, 155). By this term, Lasswell understands the self in terms of both world history and depth psychology. Indeed, psychoanalytic insight offers a complement to the Marxian dialectic to help in grasping •the symbolic aspects of historical developmentŽ (1965a, 19). In Lasswell•s conception, insight discloses to a person features of the self-in-context that are •ordinarily excluded from the focus of full waking attention by smooth working mechanisms of •resistance• and •repression•Ž (1958a, 97). It is through such insight that one lessens the constraint of •anxietiesŽ that inhibit inquiry (1958a, 97; cf. 1977, ch. 3).

By seeking to reduce constraints on inquiry, Lasswell aims to enhance rationality. Well aware that no narrow rationalism is capable of this task, Lasswell invokes the psychoanalytic technique of free-fantasy as necessary to overcome both •self-deceptionŽ and the bounds of logical thought (1977, 36…37). What he takes from psychoanalysis is the lesson that •logicŽ is not only insufficient to rational inquiry, but is by itself a constraint. The constraint of the logical must be relaxed in order to gain insight into what is obvious, even though normally obscure. •The mind,Ž he argues, •is a fine instrument for reality testing when both blades are sharpened„those of logic and free-fantasyŽ (1977, 37). Insight into the self-in-context brings into focus surreptitious forces, thereby denying them their hidden and •privileged positionŽ (1951a, 524).

Although Lasswell•s touchstone here is psychoanalysis, he introduces a qualification that is of key significance in focusing inquiry: •Traditional psychoanalysis laid so much emphasis on the •deeper• motivations that it failed to provide for proportionate, contextual insight into social reality at different levels.Ž What Lasswell suggests is that psychoanalytic technique be adapted to a broader •reality critique,Ž so as to increase individual and collective awareness of the overall institutional context (1971a, 158; cf. 1976, 168).

Reaching intellectual maturity in the period following the First World War, Lasswell is hopeful that a civilization guided by intelligence can overcome the grim realities and irrationalities of the post-war world. He is impressed by the potential of emerging technology and social planning not only to alleviate wants, anxieties, and hostilities, but also to thereby provide leisure conducive to intellectual and aesthetic creativity. Yet this promise of an intelligent civilization comes with no guarantee. This is so especially in Europe, which had long fascinated Lasswell from afar and which he directly encounters through a series of extended visits during the 1920s (see Torgerson, 1987, 1990). There the post-war scene of the early 1920s presents a frightful panorama of irrationalities„antagonism, vindictiveness, brutalizing scarcity„suggesting the distinct prospect that the potential for an intelligent civilization will be eclipsed by criminality and violence. Even in America, the hopes that progressivism had pinned on the advance of science and democracy are dimmed by the advent of professionalized propaganda capable of targeting and manipulating a mass society.

It is in the wake of the First World War that propaganda emerges as a perplexing problem. Shaped in his outlook by progressivism and concerned that the public might be •bamboozledŽ by propaganda techniques (Lasswell, quoted in Torgerson, 1990, 349), Lasswell focuses on the problem in his Ph.D. thesis, published in 1927 under the title Propaganda Technique in the World War. Propaganda, as Lasswell describes it (1971b, 221…222; cf. 1928), involves •the management of opinions and attitudes by the direct manipulation of social suggestionŽ; but with an increasingly educated populace, propaganda is also •a concession to the rationality of the modern world.Ž For, with its pretensions to being a •rational epoch,Ž modernity thrives on •argumentŽ and prefers •decorum and the trappery of intelligence.Ž The rise of propaganda makes it possible to envision the dystopian prospect of an apparently democratic society being governed by •an unseen engineerŽ (as he quotes an earlier writer). Lasswell•s point in studying propaganda, however, is to render this prospect impossible by bringing •much into the open that is obscure.Ž

Lasswell•s effort to promote a critically informed policy profession can thus be read, in large part, as a response to the increasing significance of professional propagandists, who depend upon the rationality of the modern world, yet also undermine it through systematic efforts to mobilize the irrationalities of psychopathology and ideology. Through their critical orientation, the policy sciences promise intelligence capable of leading modern civilization away from an irrational path. This task requires not routine thinking, but reflexivity and creativity. For a key •feature of the policy orientation,Ž according to Lasswell, is the significance it attaches to an •act of creative imaginationŽ that is able to introduce an innovative policy •into the historical processŽ (1951b, 12).

THE TASK OF CONTEXTUAL MAPPING

In promoting the policy orientation, Lasswell developed a conceptual framework that was designed for a project of •mappingŽ the policy process in relation to the larger social process (see Brunner, 1991). His often terse specification of the elements of this framework„an enumeration of professional tasks and values together with sequential phases of decision making„gives a surface appearance that hardly distinguishes his framework from the standard check lists that now abound in conventional policy textbooks. This superficial impression is quickly belied, however, by the substance of his proposal and its most distinguishing feature, the principle of •contextualityŽ (Lasswell, 1971a, ch. 2).

The mapping of the policy process in connection with the social process involves a deliberate task of mapping self-in-context whereby inquirers orient themselves to the overarching context in which they are located„and of which they and their work are a part. Lasswell•s proposal for the policy orientation thus crucially depends upon a project of contextual mapping and orientation. •It is . . . impossible,Ž Lasswell maintains, •for anyone to escape an implicit map of the self-in-contextŽ (1971a, 155). A common practical feature of social life, the mapping of context poses a particular problem for professional inquirers because they must render the map explicit as part of a sustained effort to refine their orientation to context.

The inquirer is not a detached observer, but “a participant observer of events who tries to see things as they are” (Lasswell, 1971a, 3; cf. 58, 74–75), an actor trying to make sense of self and world. As one who is never entirely separate from the process nor ever entirely absorbed by it, the inquirer must crucially possess the flexibility of one able to engage as well as disengage; of one who, taking nothing as finally fixed, grasps how the emerging patterns of the process—influence—and are reciprocally influenced by—the actors within it (Lasswell, 1965a, 4–6, 16–17, ch. 2). Yet as an actor, the inquirer does not simply map self-in-context so as to gain an orientation to an immediate domain of action. A bigger picture, a “total configuration” (1965a, 19), is also of pressing relevance. Hence, even though one is concerned with specifics, one is at the same time aware that “subtle ties bind every part to the whole” (1971a, 2).

This emphasis on the whole does not mean that the project of contextual orientation ever comes to rest in a final conclusion. Always unfinished, the project develops through one’s continuing effort to come to grips with a vast, complex, and at times bewildering world. Although a complete grasp of the whole is, in a sense, continuously presupposed in the course of any inquiry, the whole can never be directly apprehended once and for all. An understanding of the whole is constructed, rather, through meticulous work, disciplined and refined in a continuing search for relevant evidence. “The meaning of any detail depends,” moreover, “upon its relation to the whole context of which it is a part” (Lasswell, 1976, 218). The whole, then, can never be seized as a final conclusion because it remains an inexhaustible context enveloping the process of inquiry.

Not only is the context inexhaustible in its scope and complexity; it is also constantly changing. The inquirer shifts between focusing on an overall configuration as something stabilized in form at a particular moment and as a pattern that changes in an historical process (1965a, 4–5). Contextual orientation, in other words, turns on a “principle of temporality” (Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950, xiv). Within a changing context, the inquirer seeking improved contextual orientation must examine history in order to consciously elaborate developmental constructs (cf. Eulau, 1958).

A developmental construct draws upon evidence of historical trends and conditions, formulating the image of a future that can be anticipated, but not predicted. Although aiming for “nothing less than correct orientation in the continuum which embraces past, present, and future” (Lasswell, 1965a, 4), the image of development that the inquirer constructs is unavoidably tentative, open-ended, and subject to revision. Uncertainty is inescapable because future events remain matters that “are partly probable and partly chance” (1971a, 11). As a model, a developmental construct is “speculative” (Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950, xxiii); based in concrete evidence, but necessarily going beyond it, the model is an imaginative creation.

Nonetheless, imagination is not to run counter to the evidence, and Lasswell thus sharply differentiates between developmental constructs that are deemed probable and ones that are thought preferable. Although it is necessary to set out preferable paths of historical development when determining the possibility and plausibility of different courses of action, Lasswell insists upon distinguishing clearly between wishful thinking and what we expect to actually happen (1971a, 68). Elaborated in the course of unfolding events, a developmental construct is disciplined, in particular, by the “crucial test” of emerging events and is subject to revision as potentialities of the future become “actualized in the past and present of participant observers” (1965a, 13).

There is, however, a significant twist in Lasswell’s argument that complicates the otherwise clear distinction between developmental constructs as being either probable or simply preferable. For the elaboration of a developmental construct is itself an historical event and, by changing how people see themselves and direct their actions, has a capacity to shape future potentialities. Alluding to notions of self-fulfilling and self-denying prophecies, Lasswell formulates the point in this way: “The act of considering the shape of things to come is itself an event that is not without effect on the ensuing events” (1980, 518). Simply by focusing attention on a future prospect as a goal, a developmental construct can, in principle, make it more likely. Indeed, Lasswell•s very conception of the policy orientation as an emerging historical phenomenon involves the promotion of such a future goal.

POLICY PROFESSIONALISM

Lasswell•s promotion of the policy orientation emerged from explicit plans he formulated during the 1940s while a policy advisor in Washington during World War II (Goldsen, 1979; cf. Lasswell, 1943a, 1943b, 1941c). However, these formulations were themselves refinements of ideas that were a part of his thinking in the mid-1920s when, in the midst of European chaos following World War I, he identified a potential for intellectual leadership to guide an intelligent civilization. Noting ambivalent tendencies in modernity, he could perceive the potential for a rationally ordered society that would combine technological advancement with intelligent communication and artistic cultivation. Yet, for Lasswell, this potential remained haunted by the distinct possibility of its opposite, a world of violence and scarcity, of psychopathology and propaganda (see Torgerson, 1990).

As Lasswell comes to promote the policy orientation, he explicitly locates his conception within an elaboration of developmental constructs. What he takes as given is the historical rise of intellectuals. His call for a clear policy orientation in the social sciences is a call to focus on this historical development and to shape it. For, regarding the advent of intellectuals with some ambivalence, he emphasizes as a •fundamental issueŽ the question of democracy versus oligarchy: •whether the overriding aim of policy should be the realization of the human dignity of the many, or the dignity of the few (and the indignity of the many)Ž (1971a, 41).

Although Lasswell endorses a policy profession devoted to democracy, he readily envisions„especially with rise of specialists on violence„the possibility of a profession devoted to oligarchy (1968, 186; 1971a, 43; cf. 1941b). In his principal attempt to elaborate concrete developmental constructs, indeed, Lasswell draws attention to two sharply divergent possible futures: (1) a democratic commonwealth, and (2) a •garrison-police stateŽ (1965b, 37; cf. 1941b). A •democratically oriented policy scienceŽ (1951b, 11) appears, for Lasswell, to be necessary both to attain a commonwealth of general human dignity and to avert the •threatened . . . regimentation of a garrison-police state,Ž which„in a provocatively dystopian formulation„he conceives as •a world concentration campŽ (1976, 222; cf. 1958b, 197). •If we are in the midst of a permanent revolution of modernizing intellectuals,Ž he argues, •the succeeding phase obviously depends in no small degree on perfecting the policy sciences that aid in forestalling the unspeakable contingencies latent in tendencies already more than faintly discernableŽ (1965b, 96).

Commitment to a policy science of democracy is, according to Lasswell, not to be derived from any abstract, transcendent principle. Nonetheless, he indicates that there is something about inquiry itself that tends to foster professional commitment to democracy. In a pragmatist gesture, Lasswell stresses the process of inquiry as itself being valuable. The upshot of this, for Lasswell, is that the process of contextual mapping is itself of indispensable value to the policy orientation. Without seeking to ground professional commitment to democracy in a principle external to the process of inquiry, Lasswell finds it hard to see how someone committed to the contextual principle of inquiry could avoid a commitment as well to a democratic commonwealth (1968, 182).

The policy scientist, by Lasswell•s conception, has an orientation distinguished by a •principal value goalŽ: •enlightenment about the policy process and its interaction with the social context . . . Ž (1974, 181). For Lasswell, consistent commitment to this goal is a matter of principle for inquiry. In actual situations, such a commitment is typically subject to pressures undermining it. To be sustained, it requires vigilance counteracting •the threats and temptations of powerŽ (1974, 177). The policy profession is faced with the task of creating a space where distorting pressures can be effectively resisted: no relevant information can be withheld, and unconventional insights are not only to be heard, but deliberately encouraged. Those engaged in a common project of inquiry demand openness from themselves and others (1971a, 3). As portrayed by Lasswell, the policy professional depends upon both collective support and a •life-long cultivation of the . . . potential for rationalityŽ (1958a, 97).

The obvious pressures arising from a context of power are only part of the problem. Basic to the whole enterprise are matters of personal and collective identity. The identity of a person is bound to collective identity through a symbolic medium„through •myth and ideologyŽ (Lasswell, 1958b, 168, 31, 214; cf. Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950, ch. 6)„and, once they are formed, collective symbols of identity exhibit a remarkable persistence (1958b, 169). However, a collective project of inquiry requires that conventional symbols not be taken for granted, but questioned as part of an effort to develop a •distinctiveŽ professional identify (1971a, 120): •Do we not . . . discover among social scientists some unwillingness to give prominence to hypotheses that may be widely interpreted as inconsistent with prevailing ideology?Ž By posing this rhetorical question (1961, 112), Lasswell draws attention to irrationalities that pose barriers to inquiry, a problem that leads him to seek •proceduresŽ able to make •the mind . . . fit for rational clarityŽ (1958a, 90).

A deliberate project of contextual mapping is needed to expose irrationalities and thereby diminish the distortions they might work on the process of inquiry: •The enlightened person is aware of his assumptions about the past, present, and future of himself, his cultural environment, and his natural environment. Our recommended goal is to provide undogmatic access to inclusive versions of reality, so that the chances are increased that the individual will use his own capacities of imagination and judgmentŽ (Lasswell, 1971a, 155…56). This need is of decisive importance in •policy training operationsŽ because •the cognitive map is rarely brought deliberately or fully into the open unless the individual is exposed to an instructional experience that rewards him by bringing the implicit image of reality to the full focus of waking awarenessŽ (1971a, 155). Lasswell thus stresses that the individual inquirer depends upon an institutional context, upon •agencies of enlightenmentŽ (1971a, 97), in order to gain educational experiences able to enhance insight into self-in-context (1971a, ch. 8) as part of the collective development of professional identity (1971a,[3] ch. 7).

To diminish the effect of irrational constraints on the conduct of inquiry, a project of contextual mapping brings key formative influences to full, conscious attention. The purpose is to diminish socio-psychological resistances„to employ •the contextual principle,Ž not only to counter individual psychopathologies detrimental to inquiry, but also •to remove the ideological blinders from our eyesŽ at a collective level (Lasswell, 1976, 220): •The conscious process itself may be under the domination of repetitive compulsions which are outside the awareness of the thinkerŽ (Lasswell, 1958a, 92). Here the point of the policy sciences is not to effect control, but to free inquiry:

> It is insufficiently acknowledged that the role of scientific work in human relations is freedom rather than prediction. By freedom is meant the bringing into the focus of awareness of some feature of the personality which has hitherto operated as a determining factor upon the choices made by the individual, but which has been operating unconsciously. Once elevated to the full focus of waking consciousness, the factor which has been operating •automatically and compulsivelyŽ is no longer in this privileged position. The individual is now free to take the factor into consideration in the making of future choices. (Lasswell, 1951a, 524)

Freeing inquiry from psychopathological and ideological constraints is possible because any ordering of social relationships depends upon •meaningsŽ that are, as Lasswell puts it, •subject to change with notice (with insight)Ž; it is the force of •insightŽ and •awarenessŽ that provides for changes in •the current meaningŽ and, indeed, the •contextŽ of action (1965b, 33…34). Following Freud•s affirmation of •the efficacy of insight,Ž Lasswell maintains that scientific conclusions about •human interactionsŽ should be placed in •a special categoryŽ precisely because they •may produce insight,Ž thus modifying •future eventsŽ and •changing the scientifically established relationships themselvesŽ (1956, 114…15)

Lasswell’s conception of the policy orientation ultimately depends upon the efficacy of such insight. The contextual mapping of policy professionals involves “a quest for identity” through which individuals “loosen the bounds of the culture into which they are born by becoming aware of it . . .” (Lasswell, 1958b, 194). The process is one that both breaks the hold of “current stereotypes” and creates new “key symbols of identity” (1958, 193). Policy professionalism thus develops through the deliberate testing and fashioning of personal and collective identities.

THE POLICY ORIENTATION AND THE PUBLIC

When John Dewey published The Public and Its Problems in 1927, he was responding to significant doubts about the democratic capacity of the public that had arisen among fellow progressives in the wake of the First World War. The honeymoon of the progressive marriage of science and democracy came to an abrupt end in light of the effectiveness of wartime propaganda in manipulating mass society. The crucial figure in underscoring the shortcomings of public opinion was Walter Lippmann (1965), who concluded that an enlightened elite of experts was needed to avoid irrationality in modern society. In a direct response to Lippmann, Dewey agreed that experts were important, but explicitly insisted on the greater importance of enlightening the public: “The enlightenment of public opinion still seems to me to have priority over the enlightenment of officials and directors” (1983, 344).

In The Public and Its Problems, Dewey warned of an oligarchy of experts and identified the central problem for the public as that of that of creating conditions of communication in which the citizenry could be enlightened through discourse: “The essential need . . . is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion. That is the problem of the public” (1984, 365). Recognizing the substantial difficulty posed by propaganda, Dewey indicated that solving “the problem of the public” would require an expertise in propaganda sufficient to counteract its influence.

By the mid-1920s, Lasswell was establishing himself as the leading scholarly expert on propaganda, and he saw irrationality among the public as linked to the problem of the irrationality of experts. In the 1930s, he called for improvements in “the methods and the education of social administrators and social scientists” (1977, 203) as being of key importance in developing a “politics of prevention” (1977, ch. 10) capable of reducing the social tensions that exacerbate irrationalities in society. In the context of such irrationalities, he feared, politics typically becomes a projection of irrational impulses that intensifies problems rather than resolving them.

Lasswell’s case for a preventative politics is based on the concern that “the public may be dissolved into a crowd” (1977, 192). He takes it as characteristic of democracy that policy be determined significantly more by “discussion” than by “coercion” (1977, 192). In the midst of psychopathological projections of private motives onto public concerns, he is doubtful of the potential of “belligerent crusades to change the world” (1977, 94). He also is dubious about the contention of democratic theorists that “social harmony depends upon discussion,” particularly discussion that formally involves all who are affected by a policy issue (1977, 196). Of what, then, is the “politics of prevention” to consist? “In some measure it will proceed by encouraging discussion among all those who are affected by social policy, but this will be no iron-clad rule. In some measure it will proceed by improving the machinery of settling disputes, but this will be subordinated to a comprehensive program, and no longer treated as an especially desirable mode of handling the situation” (1977, 197). Lasswell is vague on how such a comprehensive program is to be instituted in the face of powers resistant to it, but it is clear that he sees a power in rationality itself, in the discovery of a truth: “Our problem is to be ruled by the truth about the conditions of harmonious human relations, and the discovery of the truth is the object of specialized research . . .” (1977, 197). Knowledge develops and spreads throughout society, he suggests, while advancing a formulation that a Marxian critic might brand as a kind of idealism: “The politics of prevention does not depend upon a series of changes in the organization of government. It depends upon a reorientation in the minds of those who think about society . . .” (1977, 198; cf. 203).

Lasswell's manifest concern here is less to enlighten the population than to immunize it. During a time when he sees the forces of Fascism and Bolshevism mounting clear threats, he wants to protect the future of liberal democracy from the anti-democratic potentials of an irrational mass society. In this context, he even endorses propaganda in the cause of democracy. His politics of prevention would be the project of a psychoanalytically enlightened elite of "political psychiatrists" (1965a, 19–20, 181). Here Lasswell formulates the most technocratic version of his position (cf. Horwitz, 1962; Bachrach, 1967, ch 5).

Inclined more toward Dewey than Lippmann, however, Lasswell does not accept disillusionment with public opinion. Indeed, in the early 1940s, he looks back to his European travels of the 1920s and recalls antidemocratic dismissals, during that period, of liberal democratic institutions, such as open public discourse and parliamentary assemblies. Proclaiming in the title of a book the potential of *Democracy through Public Opinion*, he maintains that what democracy needs is "a new way to talk" (1941a, ch. 7): a mode of informed public discourse that is resistant to the irrationality of propaganda. This potential can be realized if the professional adopts the role of "clarifier" in educating and enlightening public opinion (1941a, 89).

Realizing this potential is the task that Lasswell (1951b) assigns to the policy sciences of democracy following World War II. Policy professionals are to oppose oligarchy through a commitment to widespread participation in the "shaping and sharing" of power (1971a, 44–48): "The aim," as Lasswell puts it, "is to subordinate the particular interests of a profession to the discovery and encouragement of public interest. This implies direct community participation as well as client service" (1971a, 119). The profession is thus devoted to the "encouragement of continuous general participation" (1971a, 117).

The policy profession stands in an educative role with regard to the public, addressing *the problem of the public*—as Dewey conceived it—by fostering conditions that would diminish forces of irrationality while eliciting and developing the potential of the populace for involvement in intelligent communication: "The contemporary policy scientist perceives himself . . . as a specialist in eliciting and giving effect to all the rationality of which individuals and groups are capable at any given time" (1971a, 120). Lasswell saw such development of the public as a way of encouraging democracy in a complex society reliant upon specialist knowledge. Indeed, he believed that democracy would be reinforced if the provision were made to give "everyone who is involved in a public controversy an expert who can say whatever there is to say on his behalf." The effect, he hoped, would be to "serve rationality" by bringing "to the focus of attention" matters that might otherwise be neglected in the policy process (1971a, 121). Arguing that critical insight should extend beyond the policy profession, he advocated "the dissemination of insight on a vast scale to the adult population" (1976, 196). Practiced in the context of a critically enlightened public, politics could become something other than a projection by individuals of their psychological problems onto public issues, as Lasswell had conceived it in 1930 in his *Psychopathology and Politics* (Lasswell, 1970). Political participation could, indeed, become part of the development of a "democratic character" (Lasswell, 1951a; 1976, ch. 7).

Yet, contrary to Lasswell's hopes for the policy orientation, the actual tendency has been the development of a professional identity marked by institutional allegiances to a sphere of organizations—that primarily of state agencies and large private corporations—that tends to reinforce tendencies toward oligarchy and bureaucratism. This observation would not have shocked Lasswell, who once noted that the effect of "professional training" was typically one of promoting "self deception rather than self analysis" (1977, 37). Alert to "pitfalls," he anticipated the failure of "many initiatives" (1971a, 132). He knew that intellectuals must learn "the conditions of survival in the arenas of power" (1971a, 125) as they find themselves caught in a net of interlocking interest" (1965b, 91). Despite these problems, Lasswell (1970b) insisted upon the importance of developing a professional identity that would offer institutional protection against irrationalities wrought by political power. A commitment to inquiry was "no private act" (1974, 183) and, as he had learned from pragmatism, depended upon a community of inquirers.

Lasswell•s account of the policy orientation thus culminates in a paradox. He announces a world revolution of intellectuals whose task it is to lead society away from irrationality and toward an intelligent democratic civilization. However, the policy profession that Lasswell portrays as the agent of historical change is„as he himself clearly recognizes„liable to be entrapped by the very oligarchical and bureaucratic forces that should be opposed in the name of democracy. Still, on its own grounds, there is a plausible rationale to Lasswell•s proposal, for he believes that intellectuals are going to be important whatever course history might take. Thus the orientation of intellectuals is bound to be important.

Lasswell•s view of history focused perhaps too much on the prospect of an apocalyptic confrontation between forces of coercive oligarchy and liberal democracy for him to adequately grasp the dangers of more subtle kinds of oligarchy, particularly ones that operate surreptitiously through a technocratic idiom. The notion of the professional, for Lasswell, involves critical enlightenment, unwavering integrity, and courageous devotion to public service. However, in a context dominated by technocratic discourse, how can professionalism develop and sustain an adequately critical focus on the mystique of professionalism?

By Lasswell•s account, the policy orientation appears in the singular, manifest as the development of a single profession with a distinctive identity. But is policy professionalism here not pictured too much as a discrete, cohesive entity? What is needed, perhaps, is to focus on the diversity of the range of policy-relevant inquiries, rather than trying to place them all under one heading. Indeed, when we examine concretely the relationships among various intellectual orientations and specific political interests, the beguiling images of calm technocratic discourse give way to the recognition of a politics of expertise, in which experts contend with one another (Fischer, 1990).

Lasswell did not want a policy orientation fractured along political lines. He insisted, rather, on a community of inquirers as a coherent collective enterprise capable of guiding the development of an intelligent civilization. As he witnessed the post-war chaos of European civilization in the early 1920s, Lasswell believed that intellectuals were capable of developing a consensual orientation for this purpose (Torgerson, 1987, 11…17, 20…27). Since that time, he supposed that inquiry could issue in a shared professional orientation through which the public could be enlightened. Central to his own effort was the development of a framework for policy professionals that would identify key symbols able to adequately guide the focus of attention in policy inquiry. He did not claim, however, that his framework was the only one possible, allowing that it was •one of many possible approaches to the policy sciencesŽ (1971, xiv). Indeed, at the end of his career, he made a notable shift away from the notion that a single consensual map might guide policy professionals and the public. As he faced blatant differences among professionals, he allowed for a plurality of maps by suggesting that the public should be systematically exposed to alternative perspectives (1979, 63).

Exhibiting no narrow rationalism, Lasswell focuses on the importance of an enlightened public for an intelligent, democratic civilization. In the end, nonetheless, his account of the policy orientation not only recapitulates the old rationalist pattern of reason ruling the passions, but also repeats the gesture of making a rational elite the hero of the story. Despite Lasswell•s pragmatism and careful democratic qualifications, it can be said with little exaggeration that the basic image is one of reason on top, calming and ordering a mass of unruly impulses below. The centrality of this image in Lasswell•s account can readily be recognized by contrasting it with the inverse image to be found in Lukács•s Marxian conception. There the very possibility of critical insight arises from the social position of the subordinate class. What Lukács saw as a source of critical insight, Lasswell views as a site of irrational impulses that are prone to propagandistic manipulation.

As its direct significance declined in the late twentieth century, the Marxian perspective came to inspire post-Marxian strategies seeking the democratization of advanced industrial societies. In these strategies, a fixation on the agency of one class-based social movement gave way to a recognition of the diversity of new social movements. Bringing strikingly unconventional perspectives to political discourse, moreover, these movements came to fashion themselves as publics (see, e.g., Angus, 2003).

At the same time, the impetus toward a radically democratic transformation of society was attenuated by a concern with immediate reform and the consequent adoption of policy orientations. The emerging publics were not enlightened from above or supplied with experts of the kind envisioned by Lasswell. Instead, these publics found themselves in ambivalent positions, creating critical distances between themselves and the official institutions dominating policy processes while—at the same time—seeking to intervene in policy deliberations (Torgerson, 2003, 1999). The publics of a diverse civil society thus found their own voices and shaped their own experts, ones knowledgeable about specific policy matters and able to engage in the politics of expertise (Fischer, 1992).

Challenging Lasswell's account of the policy orientation, these developments minimally suggest a need for revisions. The story now becomes more complicated, as Lasswell seems to have partly anticipated with his late allowance for a diversity of professional perspectives. No longer do we have a story of *the* policy orientation of professionals, who are housed within established institutions while paradoxically working to critically enlighten themselves and the public. Rather, we have a story of a plurality of policy orientations based not only in established institutions, but also in diverse publics of civil society. There are still professionals in this story, but their privileged position as agents of an intelligent civilization is at least partially displaced. If professionals are to promote democratization, they cannot simply retain secure positions in connection with state agencies and other powerful organizations, but must seek critical distances from them, taking as a point of reference the multiple publics whose voices now enter into the domain of policy discourse.

NOTES

1. This essay draws upon the results of previous treatments of Lasswell (see Torgerson, 1985, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1995).
2. Lasswell's own promotion of a critically reflexive policy profession itself becomes part of the story he tells, though this is not the place to fully discuss the implications that the narrative form of the policy orientation might have for the study of policy discourse.
3. On specific recommendations by Lasswell for an educational program (e.g., insight training, devil's advocacy, continuous decision seminars), see Torgerson (1985, 247).

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3 Public Policy, Social Science, and the State: An Historical Perspective

Peter Wagner

The idea of developing social knowledge for the purpose of social betterment took the form in which we still know it today during the Enlightenment. In many respects, the American and French revolutions were a culmination of that development and the first large-scale •applicationŽ of modern social and political theory. At the same time, the revolutions were often interpreted as having brought about a social situation in which good social knowledge would permit the gradual but incessant amelioration of social life. The ways of thinking of the social sciences were also created in that context (Heilbron, Magnusson, and Wittrock 1998; see also Therborn 1976; Hawthorn[1] 1976).

The new, post-revolutionary situation altered the epistemic position for the social sciences, even though this was only gradually being acknowledged. Any attempt at understanding the social and political world now had to deal with the basic condition of liberty; but an emphasis on liberty alone„as in the tradition of early-modern political theorizing during the seventeenth and eighteenth century„was insufficient to understand a social order. Thus, in the words of Edmund Burke (1993 [1790], 8…9), if •the effect of liberty to individuals is, that they may do what they please [, we] ought to see what it will please them to do, before we risque congratulations.Ž It is the ambivalence of this situation that created the demand for novel forms of social knowledge. Before those revolutions, a policy-oriented social science had existed in many European states. But it was clearly an approach that was serving the interests of the absolute ruler in knowing about the subjects of his principality and about the state of its resources. It was thus known as •state sciences,Ž but also, and even more tellingly, as •police and cameral sciences.Ž In the latter term, •cameralŽ refers directly to the chamber of the ruler, and the concept •policeŽ had not yet become differentiated into what we now refer to as the institution for the safeguarding of law and order, known as •police,Ž on the one hand, and the planned intervention into the social world by a state or by an organization, known now as •policy,Ž on the other. After the rise of the idea of liberty in the late-eighteenth century revolutions, a widely held assumptions was that only •policeŽ in its current meaning, but very little •policyŽ was needed, because society would regulate itself on the basis of the free expression of the wills of the individuals. Critics of this latter idea, such as Burke, but also Hegel and later Marx, knew that this would not be the case, but that a new kind of public intervention based on the assumption of abstract liberty would be required. Any long-term history of the policy orientation of the social sciences will need to start out from this novel social-political constellation and investigate the variety of ways of dealing with this situation. Most fundamentally, two strategies could be pursued; they were initially separate strategies, but were combined during the twentieth century in novel ways. Aiming at finding out what it pleased individuals to do, the emerging social sciences, on the one hand, embarked on developing empirical research strategies to provide useful knowledge. The concern for the practical order of the world in those social sciences translated, on the other hand, into attempts at identifying some theoretical order inherent in the nature of human beings and their ways of socializing, namely the predictability and stability of human inclinations and their results.

THE USES OF THE THEORETICAL TRADITIONS

The roots of the theoretical traditions in the social sciences lie not least in this political problématique. The concern of social scientists for the predictability of human action and the stability of the collective order entered into the four major forms of reasoning that have characterized the social sciences through all of their two-century history. Some theorists argued that their social location determined the orientations and actions of human beings. There are two major variants of such thinking. What one might call a cultural theory, first, emphasized proximity of values and orientations due to a common background. The nation as a cultural-linguistic entity was then seen as a major collectivity of belonging that gave a sense of identity to human beings in Europe, and, mutatis mutandis, cultural anthropology translated this perspective into other parts of the world. An interest-based theory, second, placed the accent on the similarity of socio-structural location and, thus, commonality of interest. In this approach, which strongly shaped the discipline of sociology, social stratification and class were the key categories determining interest and, as a derivative, action.

The third approach to discursively stabilize human activity appears as directly opposed to culturalist and sociological thinking, in the sense described above. In individualist-rationalist theorizing, full reign is given to the individual human beings and no social order constrains their actions. In the tradition that reaches from political economy to neoclassical economics to rational choice theorizing, intelligibility is here achieved by different means: Though they appear to be fully autonomous, the individuals are endowed with rationalities such that the uncoordinated pursuit of their interests will lead to overall societal well-being. These three kinds of reasoning make for a very peculiar set in the sense that this latter one locates the determinant of action almost completely inside the human being, and the former two almost completely in the outside socio-cultural world. In the fourth approach, the behavioral-statistical one, no such assumptions are made, but attitudes and behaviors of individuals are counted, summarized and treated with mathematical techniques so as to discover empirical regularities. This approach can be, and has been, combined with all the other three.

These four approaches to social life are all well established, and discussions about their strengths and weaknesses have gone on for a long time. What is important in our observations on the uses of the social sciences is that they have all been developed not as purely intellectual projects, but with a view to identifying and enhancing those elements of social life that bring stability into the social world. The rationalistic-individualistic idea that a society composed of free individuals would maximize wealth lent itself to argue for the dismantling of barriers to action, such as in the introduction of the liberty of commerce, but occasionally also to prohibit collective action, such as in the restrictions to form associations, be it trade unions or business cartels. The socio-economic idea of defining the interests of human beings according to social position revealed fundamental conditions for harmony or contradictions in society, such as in structural functionalism or in Marxism. The connection between Durkheim's theory of solidarity and the political ideology of solidarism in the French Third Republic is an important instance of such use of basic modes of social theorizing. The cultural-linguistic idea informed the understanding of the grouping together of larger collectivities; it was at the root of the idea of the nation as the unit polity, thus of nationalism. The behavioral-statistical approach allowed the aggregation of people into collectivities, not unlike the former two, but it worked with less predetermined assumptions about the social bond behind the aggregation. It flourished not least in state-organized statistical institutes aimed at monitoring the population, but also, in particular in Britain and the United States, in private organizations interested in issues such as poverty and deviance.